



Senators Work To Protect Americans From Perchlorate

January 4, 2007

Washington, D.C. -- U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA), incoming Chairman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, today introduced two bills that will help protect the American public from drinking water contaminated by the toxic chemical perchlorate. Senator Boxer was joined in introducing the bills by Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) and Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ). Lautenberg is the incoming Chairman of the water quality subcommittee.

"We must do everything within our power to make drinking water safe for every American family," Senator Boxer said. "Perchlorate threatens the health of those most vulnerable, and these bills will go a long way toward protecting them."

"Serious questions have been raised about the health risks of perchlorate-contaminated water, particularly for pregnant women and children," Senator Feinstein said. "The EPA has a fundamental responsibility to provide American families in California and across the country with the peace of mind that the water they drink is safe. And I think all parents would agree that they have a right to know whether their children are drinking water contaminated by perchlorate. That's why it's crucial that the EPA continue to test for perchlorate, to alert residents to the health risks when their drinking water supply has been contaminated, and to establish a clean-up standard."

"Rocket fuel should be reserved for rockets, not our nation's drinking water," said Senator Lautenberg. "The Bush administration has failed to protect the public's drinking water and warn people of potential health threats. This legislation is an important step forward to provide Americans with the health protections they demand."

Perchlorate is found in the drinking water supplies of over 20 million Americans and particularly threatens pregnant women, infants and children. It comes from rocket fuel and other sources and has polluted at least 35 states. Yet the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has thus far refused to set a standard for safe perchlorate levels in drinking water.

The first of the two bills introduced today would direct EPA to promptly establish a health advisory, followed by a drinking water standard, for perchlorate. The standard would have to protect the health of pregnant women and children. The second bill would assure that tap water is tested for perchlorate and that the public be notified when drinking water is contaminated.

###